

This has been something I have been debating on revealing for months since I first came upon this information in April and have heard the full story from multiple sources; many people believe that spreading this information is illegal, but after contacting a few lawyers and doing my own research, I believe that it's time that this story is told.

This is the truth of TUGS.

Many people believe that the creators of TUGS are Robert Cardona and David Mitton, after all, they're the duo credited in the intro and they claim they did. However, if you look further in, the truth is that TUGS was a stolen concept, stolen from a man with a big dream for a show much like Thomas.

Our story begins circa 1987 with a man named Desmond "Des" Cox. Well, Desmond wanted to create a show much like Thomas, except instead of telling the stories of talking steam locomotives, Desmond wanted to tell the stories of talking tugboats. Thus, Cox approached Robert Cardona, the often forgotten producer of Thomas for the first two seasons. In simplest terms, Desmond told Robert his idea, and the latter essentially said "We'll keep in touch."

Of course, as you can likely tell, they didn't keep in touch. Robert very quickly approached his old pal and business partner, David Mitton, and told him that they should do a show about talking boats, and David quickly agreed. Thus, the two men left production of Thomas to work on their new show about TUGS,

whilst Cox was none the wiser. They tried to cover up that it was stolen by renaming characters and altering stories to try and get out of trouble. Unfortunately for Mitton and Cardona, production of TUGS was far from perfect. Late into production, Britt Allcroft came to visit, and discovered something that would soon unravel TUGS' whole façade.

As many of you likely know, there was recently an unused face in TUGS that was leaked, while it's official title was "snatcher", you likely know it as dead Big Mickey. The intention for the face was for it to be used in a deleted scene in Ghosts; OJ would have wandered the scrapyard, remarked about a crane being there, and it would have revealed Big Mickey's "corpse" of sorts. Of course, karma bit the crew of TUGS in the rear, as Britt saw the face and was infuriated.

It's no secret that Britt is slightly insane, being infatuated with magic and overall wanting things to seem magical. Thus, Britt made rules that Thomas nor any of the other characters were to be seen in a way that could possibly harm their reputation for a child. However, as she witnessed the face mask for a deceased Big Mickey, she lost it. Britt managed to sue Robert and David and win against all odds, and the two decided that they had to rush TUGS out.

Whilst things weren't going smoothly, Robert has plans up his sleeve to milk TUGS for every cent it had before he would eventually get caught by Cox in his get rich quick scheme. Why do you all think TUGS had so much merchandise? From figurines to

plushes to even a planned range of rideable boats operated by coins, Robert wanted to make tons of money. Thus, as TUGS started to air, lots of merchandise was released too, causing the downfall of both TUGS and Cardona.

Desmond quickly noticed what was up as TUGS began to air in the UK, and not shockingly, he took both Robert Cardona and David Mitton to court over the mess. However, the case was debated for a long time until it was finally settled out of court in 2000, and Desmond was given all rights to TUGS, which he still carries to this day. However, there was no money left in TUGS at this point, and the Cox family was left nearly penniless.

As for David and Robert? Well, Robert pretty much went into the dark for a year or so before reappearing in Canada, heading the production for an eerily similar show about talking boats; Theodore Tugboat. Meanwhile, David just paid his debts to Cox and returned to the production of Thomas. However, he would remain spiteful over what happened between him and Britt with the dead Big Mickey until he was eventually let go.

The last major chapter in this short story is about the TUGS props themselves. Many will likely remember the leaked Star Tugs Trust call from a while back, and how the props were called “stolen property.” Many people incorrectly believed that the Trust got the props illegally, which as far as I know, is incorrect. However, shortly after Cox gained the rights for TUGS, a crew member stole nearly all the props from the storage unit they were held in before

Cox could rightfully claim them for his own, and as the story goes, he later gave them to a friend, and now they're with the Trust.

Another thing I wanted to mention about the leaked call is that it's stated that the characters were heavily modified from the original designs, most likely created by Desmond Cox himself. He believes the crew changed his characters so they could get out of trouble, but that didn't work at all.

Unfortunately, this is an open secret amongst the bigger users. Of course, it's likely not all of them knew, but this has been circulating in the fandom for over a year. The Trust bribes the big users into secrecy by giving them secrets that aren't supposed to get out, and I'm tired of keeping this all secret. The people on top of the fandom wants to keep it a secret so they can keep getting more secret intel and supposedly keep Britt Allcroft, David Mitton, and Robert Cardona in good lights, but I don't care. This is just like the Director's Cut mess, Ian McCue gave it to one fandom member who I won't name, and it spread like wildfire until it was leaked and the big users act like it's illegal to have it; now it's time this becomes public too.

I know many people are gonna claim that I have this super illegal information, but that's not true. Nothing I researched told me that this was illegal, instead the fandom claims it's illegal when nobody else cares. Some of you may remember my plans for something called TUGS: Recommissioned, well, that was a codename for a project meant to reveal secrets like dead Big Mickey, the Trust

having Top Hat and Grampus, this whole mess, and so on. Sadly, I got cold feet, but not this time.

You may wonder, what happened to Desmond? Well, despite his past incidents, he seems fairly happy now. He and his wife run a company which sets out to preserve as much maritime footage and photography as possible in a free database. He has briefly written about the legal battle with TUGS online as well, though he refers to Robert and David as simply “those bastards.” He actually has even mentioned the idea of him recreating TUGS, except with how it was meant to be in his eyes. I’m not going to link this page since it contains Desmond’s contact information, and I’d rather not have him be bombarded.

No matter how tempting it may be, please do not attempt and contact Mr. Cox; I have attempted to contact him to see if he would like to elaborate more, but I currently have no response. This is a very elderly man who has had quite a life, and I don’t want him to be blown up with numerous messages. I had heard many things about Desmond being a spiteful and crazy man, but by reading his words on his blogs, he seems very calm and rational, barring the names he called David and Robert. Of course, it’s easy to feign an identity online, but he seems genuine to me. However, if he really is, I’ll endure it so none of you have to.

Hopefully you all read this, I want this known, please spread it around, it’s time the truth of TUGS is known. I’ll try to update you all if Cox responds. Even if you don’t believe me, feel free to read the incredibly short article from 2000, it proves me right.

<https://www.broadcastnow.co.uk/cox-settles-tugs-battle/119806>
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